

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
September 17, 2007 - Work Session Minutes

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Brian Major called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Selectmen's conference room at the Town Offices. Present at the meeting were: Vice Chairman Ted Teichert and Alex J. Vispoli and Gerald Stabile, Jr. Also present were Town Manager Reginald S. Stapczynski and Town Clerk Randy Hanson. The meeting was duly posted and cablecast live.

II. Opening Ceremonies

Chairman Major asked for a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Work Session

Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Goals Discussion

- Review Goal – Ranking Results
- List specific goals/objectives to discuss
- Board high level discussion of Goal deliverables

Chairman Major opened the Work Session by reviewing the overall phases: (1) Generation; (2) Goal Prioritization and (3) Objectives Creation. He stressed that Phase 3 was very important and since we were at the end of the first fiscal quarter, the Selectman could brainstorm the issues.

A review of the eight goals included FY-09 Budget & Financial; Improve incoming/outgoing communications w/residents; I-93 Lowell Junction Interchange Project; Town Yard future; Development & Staffing Utilization; Youth Center; Savings/Asset Review and Town & School technology assessment/master plan.

Selectman Vispoli brought the Board up to speed regarding discussions at last week's meeting and that they were hoping to meet as a Board at least one more time before meeting with the department heads.

Chairman Major overviewed the ranking averages of the above-mentioned goals and then detailed how they ranked without Mr. Stapczynski's information. He noted that the top three goals remained the same and the only change was staff development moving to the seventh position. There was a discussion amongst the board about the goal sheets and streamlining the actual goals.

Selectman Vispoli noted the importance of keeping a budget to a consolidated amount and having all focus on budgetary matters. Selectman Stabile asked where do we

III. Work Session (cont.)

factor in the CIP and budget model and is that under FY-09 Budget & Financial as stated. Selectman Teichert noted that the CIP is a separate entity. Mr. Stapczynski stated the budget is a more umbrella term with lots of dollars associated to it. Selectman Teichert discussed the importance of the CIP and the projects associated with it.

Selectman Stabile noted the budget representation and how the numbers were arrived at. Selectman Vispoli agreed and the goals would probably remain as such. Selectman Stabile noted that certain projects listed are components of the goals. Chairman Major noted that is why Phase 3 is so critical and aids in the task force expectations to prepare for Town Meeting. Chairman Major noted if there are specific items under goals, list them as subcategories; he noted as an example that under Youth Center, a subline could be the RFP, contract, communication. Selectman Vispoli noted that each goal should have a definite set of deliverables in a deliberate amount of time. Selectman Stabile noted if there was a way to possibly tie this process into the surveys and have a citizen component along with a scientific method.

Selectman Stabile discussed the possibility of reviewing the goal process and how to modify the procedure. Selectman Vispoli reiterated that the Town Manager sets objectives for the department heads; not the Board. Mr. Stapczynski said the Board of Selectman sets the goals for the department heads and they know what they need to do. Around budgetary matters is where they would rely more on the Board.

Chairman Major stated a good idea to capture all of the comments and Mr. Stapczynski mentioned using the term rating rather than merit would be better. The Board also discussed the attainments to the goal and the word objective is good. Chairman Major asked for any discussion on I-93 or Town Yard issues. Selectman Vispoli noted that I-93 is on its own timeline and the task force has continued work to do. Mr. Stapczynski discussed removing the three separate projects from individual goals and make them separate subcategories under the Projects goal. Selectman Teichert noted that there are so many outside factors to consider in the projects goal; i.e. Town Yard, etc.

Chairman Major returned the discussion to Savings/Asset Review and the use of fuel conservation, limiting building usage, vehicles and energy savings. Town Manager Stapczynski noted that every item mentioned in Savings/Asset Review is a subset of the budget. The discussion then continued to FY-09 Budget, Improving Communications and Staffing Utilization are actionable items and all have input. Chairman Major reviewed the consolidation of the original goals from eight into its present makeup.

Mr. Stapczynski stated every department has any number of projects that are seamless and the number of steps needed to take to complete them. The Town Manager reiterated how this goal exercise/process was very important and knows where everyone is coming from. Chairman Major suggested creating a statement around four items. Selectman Stabile said the budget is not necessarily an objective. The Board brainstormed a statement regarding the budget as being a balanced budget based on the term "ability to pay".

III. Work Session (cont.)

Town Manager Stapczynski noted the objective goal for the FY-08 budget and how it was attained. There was also discussion as to terminology of other items under the previous statement including maintain 2% CIP and over a 3-year period and how the terms above can be very ambiguous.

Selectman Vispoli said financial planning is what is actual and then a continued discussion ensued amongst the Board as to what would be an overarching statement. The Board then discussed what is a necessary, current or existing level of service or an appropriate level, budgeted level and/or ability to pay.

Board Meeting with Department Heads

- Review Selectmen/Town Manager Goal Priorities
- Brainstorm objective deliverables
- Begin process to develop SMART Objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Bound)

At this time, the Department Heads arrived to continue the Work Session. Chairman Major asked them to introduce themselves: Randy Hanson – Town Clerk, James Sutton – Memorial Hall Library Director, Rodney Smith – Town Accountant, Brian Patullo – Police Chief, Tony Torrisi – Finance Director, Jack Petkus – Public Works Director, Joe Piantedosi – Plant & Facilities Director, Michael Mansfield – Fire Chief and Steven Bucuzzo – Assistant Town Manager.

Selectman Vispoli stated this process started in July and to make tangible objectives has always been goal. The Board of Selectman was not looking to get into operational procedures to Department Heads and the Board is not looking to micromanage them. Chairman Major began to review the goals discussed so far.

Selectman Teichert noted that he had hoped to have more time for the Board to discuss the goals and objectives before this process began. Chairman Major stated they were all in attendance to fine tune the process. Selectman Teichert again said he hoped to have another meeting to continue their discussion and Selectman Lyman agreed that they were uncomfortable to go any further at this time.

Chairman Major reviewed the goals and objectives discussion that had occurred before the Department Heads arrived. He mentioned again how the budget was the number one goal with improved communications with residents being number two. He also stated how the following items were grouped as projects: I-93 Interchange, Town Yard and Youth Center.

The discussion then centered around the objective deliverables which is the item that most involves the Department Heads.

III. Work Session (cont.)

Selectman Vispoli discussed the setting of goals and working with the Department Heads and how the Board can do more to quantify this piece. Selectman Stabile stated he did not feel ready to bring the department heads here at this time and still wished to firm up the Board's objectives and the Board could be getting ahead of themselves.

Chairman Major did not feel they were acting prematurely and discussed how the department heads are partners in this process and how important it is. They understand the operations best and all should be working as a single entity.

Selectman Vispoli stated if they were trying to refine the Board's goals, they should have had a document prepared to give the Department Heads before the meeting so they could digest the information. Chairman Major stated that they should use the time now and what ideas and/or questions we can put out there.

Town Manager Stapczynski stated that the Department Heads engage in goals early and

there are a myriad of little decisions they make to exercise their goals.

Chairman Major asked Mr. Piantedosi for feedback on last year's energy goals and whether the Board too aggressive in their requests.

The discussion then centered around hiring and the positions that are possibly eliminated being filled. Chief Patullo discussed how he has five vacant positions and the consequence of overtime costs needed to fill these vacancies. Selectman Vispoli stated that the Board approves the hires and didn't intend to halt the process. He asked the Board to have a meeting within the next week to hold a discussion on hiring and the real time aspect; never an intention around public safety hires. Selectman Stabile noted liaisons status meetings with the department heads and the status of hiring discussion.

Fire Chief Mansfield discussed how many departments have contract obligations to meet and he currently has three positions available and anticipated ten to twelve next year. He had a candidate available but did not pursue the matter because he was under the impression there was a hold on the hiring process with the Board of Selectman. Chairman Major again reiterated that the Board was not looking to micromanage the hiring decisions but rather how to fiscally tackle the issue. The discussion continued amongst the group on the effect on hiring and then having to lay someone off in a short time. Town Manager Stapczynski stated how every department head had to make reductions in 2002 and need to maintain existing core services.

Town Clerk Randy Hansen commented that the Board should give a directive to the Town Manager. The process should not come to a complete halt and that all new hire positions are reviewed by him for approval before going to the Board for assignment.

Assistant Town Manager Bucuzzo stated the Board's primary goal is policy and fiscal constraints for the budget and that is also the overriding goal for all.

III. Work Session (cont.)

Selectman Vispoli asked if it was possible to meet before the October 1st Selectmen's meeting to clarify this issue and to have a discussion on the hiring of critical positions on the next agenda. Selectman Stabile reiterated no reason to have a hold on hiring and the process of hiring individuals should go ahead. Chairman Major stated the hiring process will be added to the next agenda.

Selectman Vispoli stated a conversation was had about the process of advertising for positions and the ensuing hiring process. Chairman Major mentioned due diligence was in place before hiring. Police Chief Brian Patullo discussed posting of positions and the process involved.

Mr. Torrisi stated the Department Heads cannot deal with planning until the Board decides on a balanced budget for them to follow. An executive session was mentioned about discussing the Board's options and thoughts regarding the budget projections. Selectman Vispoli stated that was rather more of a task force item. Mr. Stapczynski stated that the Capital Improvement Plan is released on October 2nd.

Chairman Major stated his personal take on the matter and said he would like to maintain the standard of living. Selectman Teichert said that was an excellent point and it should be done sooner rather than later.

Town Clerk Randy Hansen stated that an override process should have been in process by early September. Selectman Vispoli said the task force has met over the issue and is aware of the timeline to be taken.

Mr. Piantedosi discussed how there are many statement regulations on local governments and municipalities and they should be asking our State Representatives for changes. It was noted that on November 30, 2007, Andover is hosting a regional meeting at Memorial Hall Library at 8:30 a.m. with the State Senators and Representatives as part of the MMA's series of Legislative Breakfasts. Selectman Vispoli noted it would be a great opportunity to have a common goal workshop with other towns to focus on goals. He suggested meeting with neighboring towns prior to the November breakfast. Town Clerk Randy Hansen also noted a block of Town officials in the Merrimack Valley should meet regularly to discuss these matters and how there is more power in numbers. Town Manager Stapczynski noted that the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce used to hold Legislative Breakfasts years ago and they were an opportunity to discuss each town's needs, etc.

The discussion then focused on the ability to merge the IT operations with the towns and schools to combine as one. Assistant Town Manager noted it makes sense to look at but would find that the school and town missions are very difficult to make happen and it is a very complicated issue.

III. Work Session (cont.)

Selectman Vispoli noted he would like another meeting with the Department Heads. Selectman Stabile reiterated to the Department Heads that the Board was not looking to micromanage their department.

Assistant Town Manager Bucuzzo thanked the Board for inviting everyone. He said communication is a key goal and hopes to have this process happen again. Chairman Major agreed and noted it was never too early to start this.

Town Manager Stapczynski distributed the FY-07 Town Goals and Objectives report and thanked the Department Heads for making it successful. He said the first key is a consensus on the budget.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made by Selectman Vispoli, seconded by Selectman Stabile, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mary Kay Poe

Mary Kay Poe
Recording Secretary

